



# Sketch Australia Flexible Veneer Installation Guidelines

**Please read the entire guidelines before commencing installation**

## What you need to install the flexible veneer sheets



### **Safety & Protection**

- Eye wear, gloves, and suitable respiratory mask should be worn in the cutting of the sheets. Avoid breathing silica dust as this product when cut, drilled or abraded can emit free silica which can be detrimental to a person's health and may cause cancer or delayed lung injury (Silicosis) if inhaled. Suitable respirators that protect from inhalation should be sourced and always worn when handling this product. Cutting should be done in well ventilated areas and the use of extraction vacuuming systems is recommended to eliminate dust.

### **Flexible Veneer Sheets**

- When ordering the sheets consider which backfilling is required i.e. (fibreglass/fabric/translucent) which is important when considering the substrate and if the installation will be internally or externally.
- Ensure that the surface texture is suitable based on the application of the veneer (e.g., for workbench purpose it is not recommended to use stone veneers with great character/split surfaces should a smooth surface be required).

### **Measuring**

- Having a ruler, measurement tape will not only help you to cut the flexible stone veneer sheet according to the dimensions you require but will also help you to mark the substrate with the same dimensions.

### **Layout Marking**

- You can use chalk, chalk line, masking, painter's tape or laser level to demarcate on the substrate the measurement of the panel so that you can easily apply it in the needed area based on the appropriate sheet size and layout configuration.

### **Cutting & Sanding Tools**

- Tools that can be used to cut the fibreglass back sheets include long-nosed tin snips. Power Tools include angle grinder with diamond cutting blade, multi tool with tungsten carbide cutting blade, wet or dry table saw when large volumes of sheets require cutting. Fabric backed - industrial scissors, construction cutting blade/knife can be used.
- Using 100 to 120 grit sandpaper or block will assist in smoothing sheet edges after cutting and create neat flush corners.

## Adhesive

- Adhesives that can be used include Multi Purpose Construction Adhesive, Polyurethane Adhesive, Polymer Tile Adhesive or Epoxy Based Adhesive.
- We recommend **Ardex Australia** adhesives. Sketch Australia with the cooperation of Ardex Australia have extensively tested the efficiency of their adhesives to ensure maximum adhesion to various substrates and to ensure the sheets remain in place for the life of the installation.
- Consider the correct adhesive based on the installation environment (internally or externally, Wet Areas – bathrooms/showers/laundries, Heat - kitchens, splashbacks, Floor or Walls residential floors recommended only, areas subject to heavy usage and staining, commercial applications).

## Adhesive Application

- Painter's scraper will allow for a much smoother application of adhesive and help to use the adhesive more economically.
- Using a 3 or 4mm notched trowel will ensure the adhesive is spread evenly & consistently covering all the surface of the sheet which is crucial for maximum adhesion.

## Sheet Placement

- Use a conventional vinyl roller or rubber grout float to press sheet into place and to remove any air that may be trapped behind the sheet for maximum adhesion.

## Cloth

- Use damp cloth after installation of the sheet to clean any excess adhesive from edge or surface of the sheet.

## Grouting

- Sketch Australia veneer sheets can be used to create a tiled effect by leaving a grout joint in between each installed sheet. Sketch Australia recommends the **Ardex Australia Grout** product range. Epoxy and polyurethane sealants can be used as a modified and caulking grout. A minimal seamless look can be achieved by butt joining each sheet next to each other.

## Sealing (Low VOC Water Based Recommended)

- The surface of natural stone and concrete veneer are porous and to protect the surface from dirt, grime and surface staining a premium quality penetrating sealer should be applied on installation. Pre-sealing the veneer sheets prior to installation is recommended with Sketch Australia recommending the **Sealers PluS** range of professional natural penetrating sealers. Sealing the surface will protect the veneer

sheets from dirt, grime, mould and staining from contaminants during and post installation. Acrylic, polyurethane and epoxy protective coatings can also be used however whilst providing maximum protection they may change the look and texture of the veneer surface often darkening and providing a gloss to the surface. Please consult Sketch Australia for more information on the required sealer for your installation project.

### **Surface preparation before installation of the flexible sheets**

- Ensure to thoroughly clean the substrate on which the sheet is to be adhered to removing any dust, grease, oil, other contaminants, flaking or loose material. The performance of the adhesive can be affected if the substrate surface is not clean, flat or smooth. The sheets are lightweight and thin between 1.5mm to 2mm thick and require thorough substrate preparation as outlined in this document. **It is recommended to test the adhesive prior to installation to see if it's suitable for the installation project.**
- Depending on the type of adhesive used and the substrate it may require the substrate and or backfill of the sheet to be sanded or roughened. The use of a suitable primer on the substrate or cleaning solvent on the backfill of the sheet may also be required for optimum surface preparation and adhesion.

**PLEASE REFER TO THE ARDEX/SKETCH AUSTRALIA TECHNICAL INSTALLATION GUIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SUBSTRATE PREPARATION AND THE USE OF SUITABLE PRODUCTS FOR DIFFERENT SUBSTRATES.**

### **Installation of the Sketch Australia Flexible Veneer Sheets**

- Using your measurement tape first measure the sheet height and width ensuring the sheet size will fit on the substrate.
- When installing multiple sheets preparing a dry fit numbering on the back of each sheet what sequence the sheet will be installed will provide quicker installation. When designing the layout of each sheet, the colour, pattern and surface texture should be considered to ensure the design is in line with the overall finish. **Clean the top surface of the sheet ensuring the colour and stone pattern is fully identified for the desired direction of veining or pattern.**
- The natural stone sheets will not have two of the same giving a unique look on every installation just as nature intended.
- Based on the sheet height/width, you can use tape or chalk to mark the area on the substrate that the sheets are being attached too. The number of each sheet can also be marked on the substrate making it easy for referencing and for a faster installation.





### Cutting

- Depending on the area size of the substrate, you may need to cut the veneer sheets. Before cutting the sheet, you can apply a tape to mark the area as a guideline where the sheet needs to be cut. A good tip also is to mark and cut on the backfilled resin of the veneer sheet which may be smoother or flatter than the front surface.
- If you're not familiar with power tools as those mentioned in these guidelines, it's advisable to use the long-nosed tin snips for safety purposes.

### Applying Adhesive

- Apply suitable adhesive to the back of the sheet using a scraper or spatula or if applying via a caulking gun using a narrow up down pattern application should be used.
- To spread the adhesive, use a 3-4mm square notch or V shaped trowel to spread the adhesive evenly across the entire surface.



- **When spreading adhesive ensure to remain 5mm from the edge of the sheet** this will minimise excessive adhesive getting onto the front of the sheet surface.
- Should adhesive be found on the surface remove immediately using a damp cloth.

**Special note** – if the sheet is being installed in an area with exposure to moisture or a porous surface, we recommend the substrate being installed over be treated with a water impermeable membrane or suitable primer. We recommend the **Ardex Australia Waterproofing Membranes & Primers** range of products.

## Fixing Veneer Sheet

- Place the sheets in the areas marked on the substrate in the predetermined sequence/location.
- You can use a rubber grout float/conventional roller to gently press the sheet onto the substrate to make sure there is sufficient contact between the two surfaces.
- When pressing on the sheet, make sure to start from the centre moving outwards to the corners this will assist to spread the adhesive evenly and remove air pockets behind the sheet. If using butt joining technique ensure joins or seams are evenly matched before moving to next sheet.



## Grout

- Allow the sheets on the substrate and the adhesive to dry sufficiently, when a tile pattern with grout is required between sheets we recommend using **Ardex Australia Grout** (See Attachment A) products.
- Using painters tape place along the edge of each sheet to be grouted will assist in reducing potential staining by the grout.
- Sketch Australia highly recommends that at least one coat of penetrating sealer be applied to the sheet surface to protect from the grout application and staining. **See Sealing section.**
- Sketch Australia sheets are very thin and grout joints between 2mm to 6mm achieve the best appearance and finish.
- Grouts that are best for the installation are preferably polymer modified or using a caulking application a natural stone silicone or polyurethane product works best.



### How to finish corners

- o Where external corners meet place one sheets corner with a 1 mm overlap.



- o Apply painters or filament tape to the corner and allow the adhesive to fully dry.



- o Remove tape from the corner and using a 100 to 120 grit sandpaper on a sander or block sand the corner at a 45 degree angle focussing on the edge that has the overlap.



- o Clean corner surface using a damp cloth and or neutral cleaner.
- o Alternative finish to corners aluminium trims, wood trims, tile trims, render trims may also be used depending on the desired finish.

## Sealing

- Using a premium quality penetrating sealer will keep the new installation of the Sketch Australia veneer sheets looking their best for the life of the installation.
- If grout has been used between the sheets wait for the grout to be totally dry before applying the sealer.
- Make sure the sheet surface is thoroughly cleaned removing any grout haze, dirt or contaminants. We recommend the **Sealers Plus** range of cleaners and problem solvers.
- Most veneer sheets will require at least 2 coats of sealer to provide maximum protection. Water based sealers allow application in less ventilated areas and where projects require Low VOC products to be utilised.
- Some of the sealers i.e., Sealers Plus Enhance n Seal penetrating sealer can provide a permanent darkening of the surface without providing a gloss or wet look finish.
- Using a foam roller, microfibre applicator, sprayer or paint brush apply the sealer in a uniform application not to flood the surface particularly on vertical applications.



- Allow each coat of sealer to dry testing between application on sealing performance. To check splash water on the surface if beading occurs generally this indicates sealer has sufficiently filled the pores of the surface.
- Where a satin to gloss look finish to the surface is required the veneer sheets can be coated using acrylic, polyurethane and epoxy sacrificial coatings. These coatings can protect the surface in applications where commercial or environments that might be subject to constant exposure to contaminants and possible staining i.e., commercial kitchens, shopping centres.
- Contact Sketch Australia when using a sacrificial coating as part of the installation for the best recommendation for your project.



## How to install translucent backing flexible natural stone veneer

- First, install the backlights of your choice. LED strip lighting is a good choice for creating light behind the translucent sheets. **For safety using a qualified electrician for installation of your lighting is recommended.** Some LED strip lights can be setup using a remote control where various light colours can be programmed to provide a different appearance behind the sheet. Using different light source i.e., cool white, warm light, RGB will create a different look for each natural stone veneer sheet.



- Most installations of the translucent sheet will be over a clear acrylic sheet substrate. It can also be placed over glass. The recommendation is to roughen the acrylic surface by lightly sanding the surface to allow good adhesion with adhesive and the veneer sheet.
- Using a transparent or clear adhesive place the translucent sheet over the acrylic substrate ensuring any wiring or remote control of the light source is functioning correctly. Transparent crystal clear polyurethane sealants are a good choice as the adhesive.
- After installation and with the backlight on it should show as below:



Backlight Off

Backlight On

## PRODUCT INSTALLATION CONTACTS

Natural Stone & Concrete Veneers

[www.sketchaustralia.com.au](http://www.sketchaustralia.com.au)

Adhesives, Grouts, Silicone Sealants

[www.ardexaustralia.com.au](http://www.ardexaustralia.com.au)

Protection, Care & Maintenance

[www.sealersplus.com.au](http://www.sealersplus.com.au)

Tile Tooling & Accessories

[www.dta.com.au](http://www.dta.com.au)



### PLEASE READ DISCLAIMER

*DISCLAIMER - Please read all instructions before beginning installation. These installation guidelines are provided in good faith help prevent any problems caused by errors in installation. The supplier of this product shall not be held responsible for installation actions taken or not taken. There are many details of installation that are assumed to be general knowledge to experienced installers, which are not included in these instructions. These installation guidelines are intended to be strictly recommendations and are not to serve as a step by step, fail safe installation checklist. Selection of an experienced installer is the sole responsibility of the project owner, architect, builder, designer.*

*Sketch Australia does not accept any responsibility for job failure resulting from or associated with improper site environmental conditions in particular hydrostatic water pressure, moisture, and substrate contraction issues.*